

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/P2935/W/20/3244389

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/P2935/W/20/3244389

Appeal By DEVONPORT ESTATES

Site Address
Land at Cold Law
Kirkwhelpington
Northumberland
NE65 7DX
Grid Ref Easting: 392965
Grid Ref Northing: 585151

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR SIMON LITCHFIELD

Address
27 Tynemouth Close
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE6 1XR

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
- Interested Party / Person
- Land Owner
- Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- Final Comments
- Proof of Evidence
- Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

By literally taking a slice out of the Northumberland landscape, this monument figuratively takes a slice out of its heart.

Like many before and since, I was inspired when visiting the wild Northumberland landscape. Forays onto Great Wanney and the surrounding hills ignited a passion for climbing, walking and cycling and gave me an appreciation of the beauty of the natural environment that Northumberland has to offer. The queen's son, Prince Charles, has long been a campaigner for rural protection and on a recent visit referred to Northumberland as a "special place". The imposition of a 55m industrial structure, in an area which needs no visual improvement, is an unnecessary step and that diminishes reason why many already come to the area. Indeed the structure is in its scale, design and construction, entirely out of keeping with its surroundings.

The locational link to the royalty appears (at best) tenuous. Why site this in the beauty of mid-Northumberland? As opposed to in any of the regeneration projects or recent post-industrial landscapes in the North East? Or does this have to be visible from the proposer's Ray Demesne estate? A vain folly for the modern gentry.

Artistic merit is a matter of taste, but one cannot help but notice that the choice of Corten weathering steel with rising ribs is almost identical to that of the Angel of the North. The proposed structure seems to be a pastiche compared to its less stated (in height) but more impactful parent.

On an individual level, I urge the planning authority to reject this planning application as unsuitable and detrimental to this area.

Having been inspired to take up outdoor pursuits by experiencing the splendour of the wild Wannies, I have subsequently sought to give back to the local communities by joining the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) and volunteering as the Secretary for the BMC North East Area.

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the national representative body that champions the interests of climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers and ski mountaineers in England and Wales. We are committed to working with conservation bodies and land managers, to ensure climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers respect protected species and habitats and are aware of best practice for their protection. In addition, climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers have a responsibility to minimise their impact on the natural environment, to follow the Countryside Code, and to leave as little trace as possible in their visits to the cliffs and mountains. The BMC thus work to encourage all climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers to be aware of this responsibility.

The proposed structure will affect climbers visiting regionally and historically important major crags, such as Great Wanney, and a number of smaller crags, such as Little Wanney, Aid Crag and East Woodburn, all within 2.5km of the site. In addition, the site is visible to a number of footpaths between the Pennine Way to the west and the St Oswald's way to the east.

Once the North East BMC Committee became aware of the proposals in late June 2019, despite the tight timeframe it sought the views of the local members via an online poll. Each local member received the following email, which intended not to display a bias towards a particular outcome:

"A local landowner submitted plans to Northumberland County Council, to erect a 55m-high structure dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth on Cold Law (close to Great Wanney crag). Photos of Cold Law as it is now and more artist's impressions of the proposed monument can be seen [in the email's attachments].

More details can be found here: <https://www.elizabethlandmark.co.uk>.

Are you in favour of the proposed development? (please select one response): Yes / No/ Not sure"

On behalf of the local area, I hereby write to convey the results of the local BMC area survey:
- Total votes: 268

- Against of the proposals: 65.8%
- In favour of the proposals: 26.9%
- Not sure: 7.3%

On the basis of this consultation with our members I also write on behalf of the BMC North East Area in opposition to the proposals.